ONTARIO'S EARLY YEARS PLAN:

A REPORT TO ONTARIO FAMILIES

February 2003

On behalf of the Ontario government, we are pleased to present to you Ontario's Early Years Plan: A Report to Ontario Families. This Report details your government's programs and services for young children and their families.

There are 850,000 children under the age of six in Ontario. The Ontario government believes that children deserve the best start in life and we recognize that parents play a lead role in their children's development. To help parents fulfil this crucial role, we introduced the Ontario's Early Years Plan in May 2001. Our Plan builds on research and community strengths to create a province-wide initiative that is flexible and responds to the broad needs of all Ontario's children and families.

The Ontario Early Years Plan is funded through the federal Early Childhood Development initiative, where money is transferred to the province to enhance early years programs and services. Ontario's share of the federal funds from April 2001 to March 2002 was $114 million.

The Ernie Eves government commitment to Ontario's children is strong and goes well beyond what you will read in this Report. Since 1995, funding for children's services has increased by more than 50 per cent, bringing the Ontario government's commitment to children to more than $2.2 billion a year.

In Ontario, we are strategically targeting the funding to improve the health and well-being of children under six, help parents in their important role, provide equal access to early years information across the province, and help communities address the needs of their youngest children. We have enhanced some existing services and introduced a number of new programs to provide a broader spectrum of services.

This is the first in a series of yearly reports to Ontario's families on our Early Years Plan. The Report details activities in our first year and lays the groundwork for subsequent years when we will show how the combination of programs and services is making a difference in the lives of Ontario's youngest citizens.

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Our government's Report to Ontario Families:

- Reviews the Early Childhood Development agreement of the First Ministers in September of 2000 that designated federal funding to go to provinces to support families and communities in their efforts to ensure the best future for their children.
- Presents highlights of the Plan and lets some of the people who experienced the benefits of Ontario's Early Years Plan tell you how it worked for their young children.
- Provides background about this Report and the four Action Areas of Ontario's Early Years Plan.
- Details the four Action Areas of Ontario's Early Years Plan with comprehensive descriptions and financial information about its individual components.

An appendix features a snapshot of Ontario children today in relation to the rest of Canada through statistics ranging from their weight at birth to their emotional health. This information will help us measure our progress in subsequent reporting to Ontario families.

We hope you will find this Report informative and we welcome your feedback on Ontario's Early Years Plan. Please visit http://www. cfcs.gov.on.ca for more information on the Ontario Early Years Plan.

Brenda Elliott
Minister
Community, Family and Children's Services

Tony Clement
Minister
Health and Long-Term Care

Early Childhood Development Agreement of the First Ministers

In September 2000, the Premiers and Prime Minister of Canada agreed to an Early Childhood Development initiative. The communiqué stated:

> "Every child should be valued and have the opportunities to develop his or her unique physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual and creative potential....First Ministers affirm their commitment to the well-being of children by setting out their vision of early childhood development as an investment in the future of Canada."
>
> First Ministers' Meeting Communiqué on Early Childhood Development, Ottawa, September 11, 2000

Through the Canada Health and Social Transfer, the federal government is providing $2.2 billion to the provinces over five years. This money is to be spent on early child development initiatives that fall under four action areas agreed to by the Premiers and the Prime Minister:

- Promoting Healthy Pregnancy, Birth and Infancy;
- Improving Parenting and Family Supports;
- Strengthening Early Childhood Development, Learning and Care; and
- Strengthening Community Supports.

The communiqué states that each government will determine its priorities within this framework.

On May 10, 2001, the Ontario government launched its Early Years Plan that connects parents and caregivers to new and existing programs and services where they live and work and that focuses on their children's early development. The announcement included details of how Ontario's $114 million share of the federal funding would be allocated in the 2001/02 fiscal year.

Many of the programs Ontario funded were new initiatives that did not previously receive government funding.

Other programs experienced increases to the government funding they received the year before. In the 2000/01 fiscal year – the baseline year – Ontario spent $162 million on these programs. Ontario's Early Years Plan funding for the 2001/02 fiscal year increased the province's investment in these programs to $276 million.

For details on the baseline year, please visit http://www.mcfcs.gov.on.ca. Click on the Ontario Early Years Plan button to find the publication "Baseline Expenditures and Activities".

Highlights of the Ontario Early Years Plan

Universal and Targeted Programs

Ontario's Early Years Plan features a blend of universal programs available to ***all*** of the province's children and targeted programs that encourage healthy development of children with specific difficulties such as autism or mental health issues.

Ontario Early Years Centres

The largest of the universal programs is the Ontario Early Years Centres initiative. A key goal of Ontario's Early Years Plan is to increase public awareness of the importance of a child's early years for healthy development. To further that goal, this government began creating Ontario Early Years Centres in communities across the province.

> "As a community, we are excited about the additional resources that are now available through the Ontario Early Years Centres. The Centres complement and strengthen services for parents and young children, adding to the continuum of services, which includes the child care sector. The Ontario Early Years Centres are accessible to all and at the same time address the needs of specific populations."
>
> **Michael Allen**
> **Executive Director, United Way/Centraide Ottawa-Carleton**
> **Community Champion, Ottawa**

These Centres offer a mix of supports that address common needs, such as literacy programs, nutrition programs and resources for parents and caregivers. They also provide other services tailored to the unique needs of each community. The Centres are staffed with child development and early years professionals and volunteers to deliver programs and to support parents and caregivers in finding the information, programs or services they need.

> "Our Early Years Centre is a warm, inviting, safe place for caregivers and children alike. As a full-time father, I've benefited greatly from the rich and supportive environment that we both enjoy. The resources are plentiful and freely available to borrow. Best of all, we all can relax and enjoy being together to share."
>
> **Peter Hicks**
> **Father**

"The Ontario Early Years Centre is an accessible, vibrant and skilled body, reaching out and into all of those venues where parents and families want, expect and need the education and support to raise and nurture their children."

Doug Sider,
Medical Officer of Health
Brant County Health Unit
Community Champion, Brant

There has been widespread community interest in the 42 Ontario Early Years Centres that have already opened their doors. Working parents, stay-at-home mothers and fathers, grandparents, and caregivers are attending workshops. People who offer child care in their homes are taking first aid seminars. Also using the Centres are foster parents, teen mothers, pregnant women and first-time parents, parents home-schooling their children, and junior and senior kindergarten teachers, to name just a few.

"I just wanted to let you know how useful the Ontario Early Years Centres in Markham and Thornhill have been to new mothers like myself. During my maternity leave, I was able to obtain helpful information from staff and meet other parents/caregivers in the community. My infant daughter, who is now almost a toddler, benefited from the programs at these two Centres and continues to attend a few sessions throughout the week. These Centres also provide a stimulating and safe place for other caregivers (such as) grandparents and babysitters to bring and spend time with their children throughout the day."

Maria Flores
Mother

"Family Day Care Services is one of Ontario's largest providers of licensed child care services, and we're also the 'lead agency' for the Ontario Early Years Centres in Thornhill and Markham. From our experience in child care, we know how important the early learning opportunities and relationships we provide are to the children and families we serve. The Ontario Early Years Centres are a way for thousands of other parents and children to experience those kinds of early learning opportunities. It's happening every day at our Early Years Centres as parents and other caregivers build their understanding of the early years and how early learning happens.

Come and visit one of our Centres. To a casual observer, it may look as though the children and the adults are just playing and enjoying each other's company, and they are – in many different languages. But they're also building the early learning foundations that will help the child achieve his or her potential later in life, and that's what the Early Years Centres are all about".

Maria de Wit, CEO
Family Day Care Services

"As a retired school teacher from another province, who thoroughly believes our children's success can be assured if we could reach them as early as possible in life, I only wish this program existed in my home province."

Cathy Levangie
Grandmother

"The Ontario Early Years Centre provides an excellent opportunity for families to play and learn together in an inviting, stimulating atmosphere."

Faye Nicholson
Grandmother and caregiver to two young children

"I am a child care provider who has always kept the number of children in my care to one or two at a time. I have found the Centre to be a welcome change to both the children and myself. We have enjoyed the opportunity to interact with other children and adults. The staff has always been friendly and helpful. The crafts and toys and different play areas help the children learn in a happy, welcoming environment."

Monica Wylie
Caregiver

In spring 2003, 61 additional Centres will open across the province and provide all Ontario families with access to services and information at an unprecedented level in their home communities.

"We firmly believe that the Ontario Early Years Centre in Nipissing will enrich the lives of all the children and families."

Linda McLay,
President, Ontario Association for Infant Development Programs
Community Champion, Nipissing

"A community-based program with universal focus, integrated with the school system and existing programs, is exactly what is unfolding here in the three provincial ridings of Windsor-West, Windsor-St. Clair and Essex. All families and children from birth to six years of age are welcome and the attendance records at our three hub sites and satellite centres can validate that they are coming to our Ontario Early Years Centres and satellites in increasing numbers... mothers, fathers, both parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, other relatives, and caregivers are bringing their children."

Dana Howe
Commissioner of Social Services
The Corporation of the City of Windsor

Other Universal Programs

In addition to the Ontario Early Years Centres, Ontario has designed 15 universal programs to ensure that **every** child, including the province's most vulnerable, has the opportunity to achieve his or her potential through healthy development in childhood.

One such program, Healthy Babies, Healthy Children, is a prevention/early intervention initiative designed to help families promote healthy child development and help their children achieve their potential. Building on the success of the existing program, this universal program extends the screening and assessment services delivered.

Providing prenatal screening helps identify problems that can occur during pregnancy and gives the baby a better start. Providing postnatal screening helps identify families with newborns who may need assistance. Providing screening services at different stages up to age six ensures that any child who is missed in the early (prenatal or postpartum) screens or whose situation changes will still be identified and receive appropriate services.

Healthy Babies, Healthy Children screening is delivered at sites where families with young children seek other services, such as prenatal programs, physicians' offices, community health centres, community clinics, hospitals, Ontario Early Years Centres, and schools. Screening can be done by a range of health and social service professionals, including prenatal educators, primary care physicians, nurse practitioners, midwives, teachers, and hospital nurses. In the case of older children (from six weeks to six years), some screening can also be done by parents.

Healthy Babies, Healthy Children:
"As a recovering addict and a new Mom, I feel the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program was, and is, instrumental in helping me stay on the road to recovery. I have much respect and admiration for my home visitor. (The program) has been very helpful and reassuring in all aspects of personal growth and parenting. My questions have always been answered, my concerns and needs met to the fullest, and I've acquired vast amounts of very helpful information."

Patricia

Promote Healthy Pregnancy and Child Development:
"Since Joy was involved with the healthy babies program she has made excellent progress in her early development. All I have to say is it is an excellent program!"

Gerald Newmaster

Public Education and Awareness:
"It is very important to keep children's teeth clean and healthy. Your pamphlets gave me a lot of helpful information – especially the pictures. My children don't like to drink milk, but the picture of a boy enjoying milk encouraged my children to drink milk for healthy teeth."

Victoria Chung

"The oral health pamphlets are easy to read, have all the pertinent information and are nicely laid out. I particularly like the choice of colours. The whole effect is very eye-catching without being overwhelming. I love the fridge magnets as a quick reference tool."

D. Emmess, Early Learning Specialist

Injury and Family Abuse Prevention:
"I would like to express my appreciation for the Perinatal and Child Health Survey Strategies initiative. Addressing local information needs in the area of parenting capacity and child health, growth and development is an area that has been overlooked in the past.

"Although we have had and continue to develop new public health programs related to improving parenting capacity, there is no recognized way to monitor and assess objectively our progress in this field. This initiative has allowed us the time and resources to bring the Southwest Region's collective intellectual capacities to bear on this issue by encouraging us to work with academics, front-line practitioners, health unit epidemiologists, and other regional experts in the field of traditional survey approaches, to develop a monitoring system.

"It specifically has given us the much-needed encouragement to develop new areas of questions for the Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System and to use it in a new way. It has provided the right environment to encourage local "risk-taking" that will lead to the development of a basis for ongoing monitoring of parent- and child-related information that is essential to build and evaluate effective programs in the areas of Early Child Development."

Ruth Sanderson, Health Unit Epidemiologist

Targeted Programs

One of Ontario's 13 targeted programs is the Community Health Centres initiative. This program is for families that have children with particular needs so that they can get the best start in life. It builds on supports to parenting and healthy child development, especially in rural, northern, inner city and culturally diverse areas. The focus is on health promotion and illness prevention, promoting equal access to health services, and encouraging links among health and social service providers – approaches that harmonize with the goals of Ontario's Early Years Plan.

Community Health Centres:

"I just want to let you know that Early Years has been a fabulous addition to the community. Being new to the area it allows my daughter and myself a place to meet people as well as an opportunity to learn how to feed my daughter nutritionally, as well as intellectually, through play groups, Krazy Kitchen and workshops."

Jane Ross

"The many months I've spent at the Teen Parent Program have helped me not only become a strong parent but a strong person as well. I have learned so many valuable skills and met so many kind and caring people. I believe (community health) centres like this one provide comfort for first-time mothers. I will always remember my experiences at the Teen Parent Program."

Stephanie Richardson

Children's Mental Health is another targeted initiative that extends services to children under the age of six. Early intervention and treatment aims to reduce more costly and intensive involvement in the future. This initiative helps to better identify children with mental health issues and at the same time provides intervention and treatment services in community settings. Individual or group-based treatment programs have two major components that are provided concurrently: child and parenting skill development.

Children's Mental Health:
"I can quite honestly say that this project (Children's Mental Health) is one of the most exciting professional experiences I have ever had, and the impact for the children and families being served through the initiative has been quite profound. This additional new funding commitment is a tremendous addition to the initiative, and will allow the province to serve many more children currently waiting for this important service."

Dr. Nancy Freeman
Psychologist

Services for Children with Autism - Intensive Early Intervention Program:
"It was with pleasure that three mothers, representing families of children with autism, received the cheque from the Minister for additional monies for the Preschool Autism Program--Eastern Ontario in August 2001. That event continued the government's commitment to increased services to children with autism and to increased support for their families. Thank you. The many families who have received services through this initiative have seen important improvements in their children; this is a good beginning to meeting their challenging needs."

Dennise Albrecht
Director, External Development
Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario

Aboriginal Child Nutrition:
"The Community Kitchen was fun, and so was meeting new people. These programs help me a lot, which is nice, and I feel grateful. I was able to bring a food dish home for my family. I like it when they serve food at these programs."

Kimberly Koutecky

Pregnant Women with Addictions:
"When I did the Fetal Alcohol Syndrome commercial for the Healthy Choices Program at the Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre, I kept thinking... if this commercial can reach out to one expectant mother this would be worthwhile. This message is a strong message – have a healthy pregnancy to bring healthy children into this world."

Candace Nebenionquit

Infant Hearing:
"The materials developed by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care for the Infant Hearing Program will provide parents of babies diagnosed as deaf or hard of hearing with critical information and hope in their time of confusion and despair. The brochures and videotapes will help to alleviate some of their fears and help with an immediate course of action. Professionals, too, will find the information valuable when planning treatment programs to guide the children and their families,"

Warren Estabrooks

Infant Development:
"My colleagues and I in Infant Development welcomed the expansion of service to five years. It allows smoother pathways through the service system for families with children with special needs."

Lorna Montgomery
Clinical Director
Peel Infant Development
Trillium Health Centre

About the Report to Ontario Families

The First Ministers' communiqué on Early Childhood Development in September 2000 included an agreement to report regularly on progress made to improve the well-being of Canada's children.

Ontario's Report is organized according to the four Action Areas identified in the original agreement and described below.

For each Action Area, Ontario has developed goals and objectives. Some of the objectives are common to more than one Action Area.

The many initiatives that make up Ontario's Early Years Plan are divided by Action Area. However, while an initiative may be listed as part of one Action Area, it may also address the goals and objectives of another.

Action Area	Goal	Objectives
Promoting Healthy Pregnancy, Birth and Infancy Supports women who are pregnant, new parents, infants and people providing care with programs and initiatives targeted to prenatal, birth and infancy periods.	To promote healthy pregnancy and the birth of healthy babies.	• Improve rate of healthy births; • Decrease infant mortality rate; and • Increase use of services and supports, including health screening.
Improving Parenting and Family Supports Promotes positive parenting with programs and initiatives that support parents and caregivers.	For all children to be healthy, safe and secure within strong families and communities.	• Increase parenting capacity; • Improve health, physical well-being, and emotional maturity in children; • Improve language, cognitive, social/competency/ and communication skills in children; and • Increase use of services and supports, including health screening.
Strengthening Early Childhood Development, Learning and Care Promotes healthy development by providing opportunities for interaction and play, helping children prepare for school, and responding to the diverse and changing needs of families in Ontario.	For all children to reach their potential by providing programs and initiatives so that they can optimally develop and be ready to learn.	• Improve health, physical well-being, and emotional maturity in children; and • Improve language, cognitive, social/competency/ and communication skills in children.
Strengthening Community Supports Features programs and initiatives that help strengthen a community's ability to meet the needs of its children and families.	For all children to be healthy, safe and secure within strong families and communities.	• Increase co-ordination and integration of early years services in the community; and • Improve availability of, and access to, early years services.

Action Areas of Ontario's Early Years Plan

Action Area 1:
Promoting Healthy Pregnancy, Birth and Infancy

"For the Ernie Eves' government, promoting healthy pregnancy and the birth of healthy babies makes common sense. The objectives of Ontario's Early Years Plan include seeing more babies born at higher and healthier weights, reducing infant mortality, and getting more people using the services and supports available to them, including health screening."

Tony Clement
Ontario's Minister of Health and Long-Term Care

Infant Development

Ontario's Early Years Plan Funding in 2001/02
$3,400,000

What The Program Does
The Infant Development Program helps children who are at risk of delays in development or diagnosed with a developmental disability. The new funding has extended eligibility for services from those children aged three to five.

This program is funded by the Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services.

Who The Program Serves
This *targeted* program serves children under age six with a developmental disability or a developmental delay.

What We've Done
- Children are now being served by the program at 50 sites across Ontario.
- 2,283 children received services through the Infant Development Program – 1,460 children were up to three years of age. 823 children were aged three to five years.
- This funding has helped to address the waiting list for this program.

Aboriginal Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Effects (FAS/FAE)

Ontario's Early Years Plan Funding in 2001/02
$1,400,000

What The Program Does
The Aboriginal FAS/FAE program is delivered by 22 Aboriginal program delivery organizations. The program provides health promotion, prevention education and family support services related to fetal alcohol syndrome/effects. (See also the Aboriginal Child Nutrition program on page 26.)

The program is funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Who The Program Serves
This *targeted* program serves Aboriginal children and families living on and off reserve.

What We've Done
- FAS/FAE workers facilitate a range of public education and health promotion activities, pre and post-natal support groups and information services for schools, childcare and social service providers. Advocacy and support is provided to FAS/FAE affected children and their families.
- Services were provided to approximately 2,000 people.
- One-time funding was provided to six Aboriginal organizations to perform research, produce print and resource materials and deliver province-wide training to Aboriginal front-line workers.

Healthy Babies, Healthy Children

Ontario's Early Years Plan Funding in 2001/02
$3,550,000

What The Program Does
Healthy Babies, Healthy Children is delivered by Ontario's 37 Public Health Units. This program screens and assesses families with children for risks to healthy child development. Building on the success of the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program, this funding extends the screening and assessment services delivered by the program.

The program is funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Who The Program Serves
This *universal* program is for families with children up to the age of six.

What We've Done
- Public Health Units implemented the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children Policy on Universal Screening and Assessment for Healthy Child Development Prenatal to School-Age.

- Funding was allocated to the Ontario College of Family Physicians to lead the collaborative development of a continuing medical education program in healthy child development for doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners, dentists and midwives.
- The program also supported the Infant Hearing and Screening program.

Support for At-Risk Pregnant Women

Ontario's Early Years Plan Funding in 2001/02
$70,000

What The Program Does
The Support for At-Risk Pregnant Women program provides outreach and early intervention to at-risk pregnant women before the baby is born. Toronto Public Health and their satellite sites deliver the initiative.

The program is funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Who The Program Serves
This *targeted* initiative is for pregnant women and youth, and their children who are homeless or in temporary housing, e.g., hostels, transition houses or hotels.

What We've Done
- The program has been designed, following consultation.

Prenatal HIV Testing

Ontario's Early Years Plan Funding in 2001/02
$414,000

What The Program Does
This Prenatal HIV Testing initiative increases awareness of the importance of HIV testing in pregnancy as part of routine prenatal care.

The initiative is funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Who The Program Serves
The *targeted* initiative serves pregnant women and women considering pregnancy, as well as programs delivering prenatal services.

What We've Done
- Over 2 million educational materials were printed including brochures in a number of languages, posters, postcards, discussion guides and catalogues.
- Articles on prenatal HIV testing were written and published.
- Print materials were mailed to 378 services accessed by women and to more than 15,000 service providers.

Prenatal and Postnatal Nurse Practitioner Services

Ontario's Early Years Plan Funding in 2001/02
$250,000

What The Program Does
The Prenatal and Postnatal Nurse Practitioner Services program is being delivered by 10 selected Public Health Units. It improves access to prenatal and postnatal services in isolated and under-served areas by funding Public Health Units to support nurse practitioners.

The program is funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Who The Program Serves
The *universal* program provides prenatal and postnatal health care to pregnant women, new mothers and their infants in specific areas of the province, including Algoma, Brant County, Elgin-St. Thomas, Haldimand-Norfolk, Huron County, Perth, Porcupine, Sudbury, Timiskaming and Windsor Essex County.

What We've Done
- Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care developed a provincial project framework, guidelines and application process as a basis for the initiative.

Maternal Newborn and Early Child Development Resource Centre

Ontario's Early Years Plan Funding in 2001/02
$500,000

What The Program Does
The Maternal Newborn and Early Child Development Resource Centre initiative expands an existing provincial resource centre that provides training, consultation and information to the community by including new topics such as early child development, nutrition, tobacco reduction, and healthy pregnancy.

The initiative is funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Who The Program Serves
This *universal* initiative is intended for health care providers and community health professionals.

What We've Done
- A train-the-trainer program was developed for physicians on alcohol use during pregnancy (includes production of trainer manual, participant manual, two related desk references, posters and a planning guide). Training will begin in 2003.

- Resources on the importance of smoke-free homes have been produced and will be distributed beginning in 2003.
- Resources for clinical settings on breastfeeding have been produced and will be distributed beginning in 2003.
- Workshop series and curriculum were developed on socio-economic status and reproductive health. Workshops will begin in 2003.

Breastfeeding Promotion

Ontario's Early Years Plan Funding in 2001/02
$150,000

What The Program Does
The Breastfeeding Promotion initiative produced a media campaign and educational materials to promote breastfeeding.

The initiative is funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Who The Program Serves
This *universal* program features a public awareness campaign designed to promote the benefits of breastfeeding to women of childbearing age, pregnant and new mothers, new fathers and fathers-to-be, the general public, boards of health, community partners, and providers of preconception and prenatal care.

What We've Done
- An audit was conducted identifying and accessing resources currently being used to promote breastfeeding in the community to see what works, what does not work, and what is needed.
- 16 segments for a parenting television series, *The Parent Trip*, were filmed. A media campaign (e.g., subway posters) was developed to supplement the television series.

Prevention of Neural Tube Defects

Ontario's Early Years Plan Funding in 2001/02
$135,000

What The Program Does
The Prevention of Neural Tube Defects initiative develops and distributes educational materials, and creates community awareness campaigns about the importance of women taking folic acid for healthy infant development during pregnancy.

The program is funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Who The Program Serves
This *universal* initiative is a public awareness strategy for women of childbearing age and community service providers.

What We've Done
- Community Action Kits were developed and distributed in conjunction with the provincial Folic Acid Alliance of Ontario campaign.
- The Community Action Kits included
- A manual with background information on folic acid and neural tube birth defects, samples of community activities and news releases, and 30- and 60-second scripts for radio public service announcements (PSAs);
- A video with sample PSAs for use on local television stations, educational group sessions or community events; and
- English/French posters and brochures, and fridge magnets.
- 25 copies of the PSA video were distributed to TV networks across Ontario (CTV, CBC, City TV, Global and their local affiliates).
- CD ROM including activity planning materials and promotional program art work was produced for use by community service providers.

Electronic Record for Prenatal and Postnatal Health

Ontario's Early Years Plan Funding in 2001/02
$135,000

What The Program Does
The Electronic Record for Prenatal and Postnatal Health is a two-part initiative to maintain an electronic version of the Antenatal Record, which consists of records used by physicians and midwives to track the medical history of clients during pregnancy. The initiative includes a strategy for electronic transmission of records to hospitals.

The initiative is funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Who The Program Serves

This *universal* initiative serves Ontario obstetricians, family physicians, midwives and nurse practitioners who complete the forms being automated through this initiative.

What W'e've Done

- The Ontario government and the Ontario Medical Association are working together to create the electronic version of the Antenatal Record.
- 5,000 copies of the health record software were purchased for distribution to health care providers.

Action Area 2:
Improving Parenting and Family Supports

"We want to give all children the opportunity to be healthy, safe and secure within strong families and communities. We believe this can be accomplished by promoting the use of services and supports, including health screening, that will help parents in their important role; improve the health, physical well-being and emotional maturity of children; and strengthen children's language, cognitive, social, and communications skills."

Brenda Elliott
Ontario's Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services

Early Years Challenge Fund (EYCF)

Ontario's Early Years Plan Funding in 2001/02
$15,400,000

What The Program Does
The Early Years Challenge Fund is a matching program that challenges businesses, volunteer and charitable groups to help communities develop new programs for all parents and young children.

The program is funded by the Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services.

Who The Program Serves
This *universal* program benefits all children up to the age of six, their families and caregivers.

What We've Done
- 39 Early Years Steering Committees were established across Ontario to raise community awareness of the early years and support the Challenge Fund application process. In addition, the Steering Committees completed Action Plans to expand early years services within their communities. The Committees ended March 31, 2002.
- 605 requests for project funding were received in response to calls for proposals during 2001/02.
- 260 proposals were approved, representing community, province-wide, Aboriginal and Francophone sectors.
- 69 projects were operating by March 31, 2002 (including 27 projects approved during 2000/01), with 218 scheduled to begin operating in 2002/03.
- Projects had an average of five partnerships; the most frequent partners included businesses, service clubs, (e.g., Rotary Clubs), the faith community, school boards, other funded agencies and municipalities.

Learning, Earning and Parenting (LEAP) (Ontario Works)

Ontario's Early Years Plan Funding in 2001/02
$1,000,000

What The Program Does
The LEAP program assists young parents to complete high school by providing help with tutoring, parenting skills, child care, school expenses and job finding. Municipalities deliver LEAP as part of Ontario Works, with a total of 47 sites across the province. Voluntary participation is encouraged through outreach and marketing.

LEAP was first implemented in March 1999, and is a targeted strategy of the Ontario Works Employment Assistance Program for parents aged 16 to 21 who have not completed high school. Participation is mandatory for 16 to17 year olds and voluntary for 18- to 21-year-old parents on Ontario Works who have not completed high school. The new funding expands the program to encourage all eligible 18- to 21-year-old parents to participate in LEAP.

The program is funded by the Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services.

Who The Program Serves
LEAP is a targeted program. The new program funding encourages all eligible 18- to 21-year-old parents to participate.

What We've Done
- On average, there were approximately 3,500 youth aged 18 to 21 participating (estimate based on partial data).
- Work began in late 2001/02 on a provincial "LEAP Forum" to promote the development of better planning and delivery of integrated services for families and children at the local level, and to provide the opportunity for front-line staff to network, collaborate and share best practices.
- Revised implementation guidelines have been distributed to support the expansion to 18 to 21 year olds.

Children's Mental Health

Ontario's Early Years Plan Funding in 2001/02
$6,900,000

What The Program Does
The Children's Mental Health program enhances early identification, intervention and treatment services for children and is delivered by 58 transfer payment agencies.

The program is funded by the Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services.

Who The Program Serves
The *targeted* program serves children up to the age of six and their families who have social, emotional or behavioural problems or who have mental or psychiatric disorders.

What We've Done
- 946 children benefited in the first year.

Promote Healthy Pregnancy and Child Development

Ontario's Early Years Plan Funding in 2001/02
$2,300,000

What The Program Does
The Promote Health Pregnancy and Child Development initiative strengthens a community's capacity to support healthy pregnancy and child development.

The initiative is funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Who The Program Serves
This *universal* initiative is a population-based, health promotion/primary prevention strategy. It focuses on children up to the age of six and their parents or caregivers, expectant parents and community service providers.

What We've Done
Public Health Units:
- worked with local communities to set priorities, a vision and health promotion strategies;
- completed an inventory of local services and resources and identified gaps in community supports and services;
- identified key partnerships and their specific roles as well as training and education needs of board of health staff working in this area;

- developed a comprehensive four-year project plan to address one or more of the following areas: healthy pregnancy; child growth and development up to age six; and/or parenting capacity; and
- developed an evaluation framework.

Public Education and Awareness

Ontario's Early Years Plan Funding in 2001/02
$175,000

What The Program Does
The Public Education and Awareness initiative promotes and distributes public education materials about early child development and parenting. Materials are sensitive to diverse literacy, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds.

The initiative is funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Who The Program Serves
The *universal* initiative is a population-based, health promotion/primary prevention strategy providing public education materials to parents and caregivers of young children, expectant parents, the general public, boards of health staff and community partners.

What We've Done
- Public education resources currently being used were identified and assessed. From this audit, key messages, audiences and distribution channels were developed and cultural and linguistic groups were identified.
- Six television segments were developed and filmed.
- Promotional print materials were produced including pamphlets, fact sheets, magnets and posters.

Community Health Centres

Ontario's Early Years Plan Funding in 2001/02
$2,700,000

What The Program Does
The Community Health Centres program is delivered by 35 centres and builds on supports to parenting and healthy child development, especially in rural, northern, inner-city and culturally diverse areas. It provides screening, risk assessment and referral by Community Health Centres for pregnant women and new mothers.

The program is funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Who The Program Serves
The *targeted* initiative serves pregnant women and new mothers with infants up to age three. In future years, the program expects to expand its services to parents and their children up to six years of age.

What We've Done
- 55 different programs were initiated.
- 739 children and 811 parents/families were served. Of these, an average of 70 per cent were new clients (i.e., not previously seen by a Community Health Centre).
- Community consultations/needs assessments and program planning took place to prepare for expansion of the program.

Early Years Capital

Ontario's Early Years Plan Funding in 2001/02
$6,500,000

What The Program Does
The Early Years Capital program provides funding to support the capital component of early years projects supporting young children and their families.

The program is funded by the Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services.

Who The Program Serves
The Early Years Capital program benefits young children and their families.

What We've Done
- A number of one-time grants were provided to agencies serving children.

Action Area 3:
Strengthening Early Childhood Development, Learning and Care

"As a mother of four grown children, I understand that for children to reach their potential, we have to make it possible for them to maximize opportunities available in their early developing years and to ensure they are ready to learn. The same objectives hold true for supporting children and families; we must improve the health, physical well-being and emotional maturity of children; and strengthen their language, cognitive, social, and communications skills."

Brenda Elliott
Ontario's Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services

Aboriginal Child Nutrition

Ontario's Early Years Plan Funding in 2001/02
$1,000,000

What The Program Does
The Aboriginal Child Nutrition program provides nutrition education combined with a focus on parenting skills development. (See also the Aboriginal Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Effects program on page 13.)

The program is funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Who The Program Serves
This *targeted* initiative serves Aboriginal children and families living on and off reserves.

What We've Done
- The Aboriginal Child Nutrition program is delivered by 22 Aboriginal service delivery organizations in conjunction with the Aboriginal FAS/FAE program.
- Implemented in 2001/2002, the first phase of this program focused mainly on training and development of resource materials. In addition, the program provided nutrition and healthy lifestyle education and counselling, food and menu preparation and healthy breakfast programs for Aboriginal communities.
- Workshops and parent support groups promote positive parenting practices.
- Print resources have been produced on menu planning, food preparation, infant nutrition, and the design and implementation of community gardens.
- Services were delivered to approximately 1,300 people.

Ontario Early Years Centres

Ontario's Early Years Plan Funding in 2001/02
$30,200,000

What The Program Does
Ontario Early Years Centres offer a mix of supports that address common needs, such as literacy programs, nutrition programs and resources for parents and caregivers. They also include other services tailored to the unique needs of each community. The Centres are staffed with child development and early years professionals and volunteers who deliver programs and support parents and caregivers in finding the information, programs or services they need.

Every Ontario Early Years Centre offers a range of free education and parenting services for all parents and caregivers of young children. By 2003, the services at the 103 Centres will include:

- literacy and interactive learning activities involving caregivers and children;
- parenting programs covering all aspects of early child development;
- programs for new parents on pregnancy and parenting;
- links to other early years programs in the community; and
- outreach activities, to ensure all parents can become involved with their local Ontario Early Years Centre.

The program is funded by the Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services.

Who The Program Serves
The Ontario Early Years Centres program is a *universal* program serving children up to the age of six, their parents, other family members (including grandparents and siblings), caregivers and child care providers including child care centres and home care providers.

What We've Done
- Eight Ontario Early Years Centres were open and ready to provide services by March 31, 2002.
- 23 more sites were operational in the first week of April 2002.
- Training for 240 Ontario Early Years Centres staff was delivered by March 31, 2002.
- The Ontario Early Years Centre Infoline (1-866-821-7770) handled 3,227 calls from the general public, parents, caregivers, and community groups.
- A website – http://www.ontarioearlyyears.ca – connecting the public to Ontario Early Years Centres went live in March 2002.

Expansion of Early Literacy Agenda

Ontario's Early Years Plan Funding in 2001/02
$5,000,000

What The Program Does
The Early Years Literacy Agenda promotes, initiates and develops child and family literacy. Funding was provided for Early Literacy Specialists who:

- distributed Early Literacy Kits (package of 56 children's and parent resource books) to local community-based early years programs;
- conducted train-the-trainer workshops with early years professionals;
- built collaborative relationships with local early years professionals and programs to bolster community efforts in supporting early literacy and language development of children and their parents.

The program is funded by the Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services.

Who The Program Serves
The *universal* program serves children up to the age of six, with a focus on children up to age three, and their parents. In addition, the program supports community-based early years programs such as Ontario Early Years Centres, child care centres, libraries, and parent-child drop-ins.

What We've Done

- An Ontario Early Years Book Collection was provided to each of the first 42 Ontario Early Years Centres. The collection is made up of 56 titles (45 in English and 11 in French), representing the diversity of Ontario's population, including multi-language books, books for children up to age six, and parent and staff resource books.
- 50 Early Literacy Specialists were hired to work out of Ontario Early Years Centres or host agencies.

Services for Children with Autism - Intensive Early Intervention Program

Ontario's Early Years Plan Funding in 2001/02
$20,000,000

What The Program Does
The Intensive Early Intervention initiative expands the existing program to increase access to Intensive Behavioural Intervention (IBI) services for children with autism. Nine regional providers deliver the program directly or provide funding to families to purchase the service from private providers.

The initiative is funded by the Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services.

Who The Program Serves
Intensive Early Intervention is a *targeted* initiative that provides IBI for children between the ages of two and five years of age. Eligibility is determined through a clinical assessment.

What We've Done
- As of March 31, 2002, 549 children were receiving IBI.
- Regional providers are actively recruiting clinical psychologists and therapists to increase the program's capacity.

Pregnant Women with Addictions

Ontario's Early Years Plan Funding in 2001/02
$2,500,000

What The Program Does
The Pregnant Women with Addictions program provides addiction treatment and other services such as child care, life skills and parenting to pregnant women across the province. The program was built on a successful model called "Breaking the Cycle".

The program is funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Who The Program Serves
The *targeted* program serves pregnant women with addictions and their children up to age six.

What We've Done
- 17 programs were developed and scheduled to start between April and July of 2002.

Injury and Family Abuse Prevention

Ontario's Early Years Plan Funding in 2001/02
$4,000,000

What The Program Does
The Injury and Family Abuse Prevention initiative involves Public Health Units working with communities to strengthen their ability to prevent injury and violence. The aim is to create safer environments to reduce infant and childhood injuries and to increase identification and response to family abuse. The initiative will operate out of 37 Public Health Unit sites and some satellite sites.

The initiative is funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Who The Program Serves
This *targeted* initiative is a population-based, health promotion/primary prevention strategy for expectant parents, children up to the age of six and their

parents and caregivers, and community service providers such as midwives, physicians, and early childhood educators.

What We've Done

- Communities were consulted to set project priorities, develop a vision and population health promotion strategies.
- Community inventory was completed identifying local services and resources, a local needs assessment identifying gaps in community supports and services, identification of key partnerships and their specific roles, and identification of training and education needs of board of health staff working in this area.
- A comprehensive four-year project plan was developed to address risk and protective factors associated with childhood injury and family abuse prevention.
- Eight provincial workshops were held across Ontario for board of health staff and community partners on the topics of playground safety, injury prevention, and skill-based training on building community partnerships and program development.

Infant Hearing

Ontario's Early Years Plan Funding in 2001/02
$600,000

What The Program Does
The Infant Hearing program is a public education and awareness campaign. It supports the Infant Hearing Screening and Communications Development Program that screens infants for hearing problems and focuses on early identification and treatment of newborn/infant hearing problems.

The program is funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Who The Program Serves
The *targeted* public education strategy is aimed at new or prospective parents, parents receiving services through the Infant Hearing Program, health professionals, such as physicians, public health nurses, and prenatal instructors who interact with parents of newborns/infants and prospective parents, and the general public.

What We've Done

- Seven brochures and a poster were published in 13 languages including English, French and 11 others on the importance of hearing and/or early identification of deaf/hard of hearing babies. Three additional brochures were designed.
- Two educational videos were developed in English and French for parents of babies identified as deaf or hard of hearing, to provide information on oral and sign language methods of communication for infants with hearing loss.

- The Hearing Foundation of Canada updated their universal newborn hearing screening video and will make it available in 13 languages, as well as on compact disc
- 17 TV segments were developed for *The Parent Trip*.
- A web page was added to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's website. The website provides information about the Infant Hearing Program, lists publications produced by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and by other organizations, and provides links to related sites and provides on-line access to information on the Infant Hearing Program. The website can be located at: http://www.gov.on.ca/health/english/program/child/hearing/hearing_mn.html.

Sexual Assault Treatment for Children

Ontario's Early Years Plan Funding in 2001/02
$1,440,000

What The Program Does
The Sexual Assault Treatment for Children program provides services and treatment to children who have been sexually assaulted. These services are provided through hospital-based sexual assault treatment centres.

The program is funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Who The Program Serves
The *targeted* program serves children who have been sexually assaulted.

What We've Done
- Planning is underway for 17 program sites.

Action Area 4:
Strengthening Community Supports

"Ontario's Early Years Plan builds on research and community strengths to create a province-wide initiative that is flexible and responds to the broad needs of all Ontario's children and families. We set out to increase local coordination and integrate early years services that already existed in communities so that services would be more available and access improved for families with young children."

Tony Clement
Ontario's Minister of Health and Long-Term Care

Program Effectiveness Measurement

Ontario's Early Years Plan Funding in 2001/02
$2,000,000

What The Program Does
The Program Effectiveness Measurement initiative enables the collection and analysis of data, which is used to track progress in improving early years programs. This will facilitate future planning.

The initiative is funded by the Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services.

Who The Program Serves
This *universal* initiative is focused on local early years programs and planners at local and provincial levels.

What We've Done
- 44 Data Analysis Coordinators were hired and trained to support local early years planning and program tracking.
- A program logic model was developed for Ontario Early Years Centres and the Early Years Challenge Fund projects. The logic model provides an evaluation framework for the initiatives.

Child Outcome Measurement

Ontario's Early Years Plan Funding in 2001/02
$500,000

What The Program Does
The Child Outcome Measurement initiative measures child outcomes in Ontario, with a particular focus on children up to the age of six.

The initiative is funded by the Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services.

Who The Program Serves
The *universal* initiative is designed to help planners and service providers at local and provincial levels determine what services are required for young children.

What We've Done
- Funding was provided to McMaster University's Centre for Studies of Children at Risk to further develop the Early Development Instrument (EDI). The EDI is an instrument that measures how kindergarten-aged children are doing in different communities in Ontario.

Perinatal and Child Health Survey

Ontario's Early Years Plan Funding in 2001/02
$2,000,000

What The Program Does
The Perinatal and Child Health Survey initiative collects baseline measures for a broad range of outcomes and risk factors related to maternal, pregnancy and infant health.

The initiative is funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Who The Program Serves
The *universal* initiative is designed to help planners and service providers at local and provincial levels determine what services are required for young children.

What We've Done
- Environmental scan of initiatives and opportunities was conducted. This scan considered need, impact, appropriateness and capacity to address information areas.
- Project outlines were submitted based on discussions with epidemiologists and key early child development staff and stakeholders.
- Draft survey tools were developed.

Ontario's Early Years Plan
A Report to Ontario Families

Appendix: Ontario Child Outcomes Report

Following the First Ministers' Meeting Communiqué on Early Childhood Development, Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers agreed in May 2002 that provinces would begin regular reporting on the 11 child-related outcome indicators of health and development. The purpose is to show whether the new programs are making a difference. Identifying measurable outcomes for Ontario's Early Years Plan is central to tracking these outcome indicators.

This Report covers the agreed-upon indicators, which are divided into two sections, Physical Health and Early Development.

Physical Health

(All data are for the most recently available year, 1999)

Indicator(s)/Measure(s)	*Data Source*	*Availability*
Healthy Birth Weight	Vital Statistics 1999	Available for provinces/territories.
Infant Mortality Rate	Vital Statistics 1999	Available for provinces/territories.
Immunization (3 indicators): Invasive meningococcal disease; measles; haemophilus influenza b (Hib3) disease in children	Health Sector 1999	These are interim measures, available for 11 to 14 jurisdictions.

Early Development

(All data in this section are from the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY), Cycle 3, 1998/99)

Indicator(s)/Measure(s)	*Data Source*	*Availability*
Physical Health and Motor Development	NLSCY, Cycle 3 (1998/99)	Available for provinces; availability for territories to be determined.
Emotional Health (two indicators): - Emotional Problem/Anxiety - Hyperactivity	NLSCY, Cycle 3 (1998/99)	Available for provinces; not available for territories.
Social Knowledge and Competence (two indicators): - Physical Aggression, Conduct Problem - Prosocial Behaviour	NLSCY, Cycle 3 (1998/99)	Available for provinces; not available for territories.
Language Skills	NLSCY, Cycle 3 (1998/99)	Available for provinces; not available for territories.

A. Physical Health

The indicators in this section of the Report are from population-based data. That is, they cover all cases in the population. Birth Weight and Infant Mortality figures are from provincial Vital Statistics, which record all births and deaths in a province. Health Canada and the provincial Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care provided immunization data.

We have only reported baseline data in this Report. However, information on longer-term trends for these child health indicators can be found in the document, *Ontario's Health System Performance Report, 14 Common Indicator Areas of Health and Health System Performance*, Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, September 30, 2002, which is also available on the Ministry's website at http://www.gov.on.ca/health/english/pub/ministry/pirc/pirc_mn.html.

- Birth Weight

  Infants are more likely to die in the first year of life if they weigh less than 2,500 grams (5.51 pounds) at birth. Even when they survive, they are more likely to have health problems throughout their lives. Low birth weight is often a sign of the mother's health; women who do not smoke or use alcohol during pregnancy and receive regular prenatal care are more likely to have healthy, full-weight babies. Many low-birth-weight babies in Ontario are born prematurely or are multiple births.

  The most recent year for which this data is available, 1999, shows that Ontario's rate of low-weight births is better than that of most other developed countries, but it could be improved. Ontario's rate was 5.8 per cent, compared with the Canadian average of 5.5 per cent.[1]

- Infant Mortality

  The number of children who survive the first year of life is a sign of how healthy a country is. It reflects both parental health and lifestyles, and other societal factors – living conditions, a healthy environment, and health care available during pregnancy.

[1] These figures follow the definition used by the recent F/P/T Performance Indicators Reporting Committee, *Plan for Reporting on 14 Indicator Areas*, June 20, 2002. The definition excludes live births of children under 500 grams. The definition used for purposes of international comparison includes **all** births under 2,500 grams. Using this definition, Ontario's rate is 5.8 per cent, compared to a Canadian rate of 5.6 per cent.

Ontario's Infant Mortality Rate was 4.6 per 1,000 live births, compared to the Canadian rate of 4.4.[2]

- Immunization

Because there is no comprehensive, Canada-wide system for capturing information on immunization rates, three disease rates have been selected for use on an interim basis as measures reflecting immunization. They are expressed as a rate per 100,000 people. All three diseases are preventable through immunization.

It is worth noting that the occurrence of these diseases is now rare. For example, the total number of meningitis cases in Canada in 1999 was 10. The low frequency, coupled with the periodic nature of measles outbreaks, means that the rates can show large variations among provinces and between years.

a) Meningitis

Invasive meningococcal disease (IMD), commonly referred to as meningitis, is a rare but serious bacterial disease spread by direct contact. Roughly 10 per cent of people who contract IMD will die, and those who survive may suffer serious after-effects. Its incidence is highest among children under the age of one and those between the ages of 15 and 19.

The rate for Ontario has declined over time, and as of 1999 was 0.5 per 100,000 people. This is also the rate for Canada as a whole.

b) Measles

Measles is a highly communicable viral disease that is preventable through immunization. It is more severe in infants and adults. Complications can include middle ear infection, croup, and encephalitis. The Ontario rate has dropped drastically since 1980 from 94.37 to 0.03 per 100,000 people. Periodic outbreaks can lead to significant fluctuations. Ontario's rate in 1999 was lower than the rate for Canada, which was 0.5.

[2] As with the Low Birth Weight figures reported above, the figures used reflect definitions from the F/P/T *Plan for Reporting on 14 Indicator Areas*. The definition excludes deaths of children weighing less than 500 grams at birth. Using the standard international definition of Infant Mortality, the Ontario rate is 5.4, compared to 5.3 for Canada. Because the mortality rate in infants less than 500 grams is elevated, including them raises the overall Infant Mortality Rate.

c) HIB

Haemophilus Influenza b (invasive) was formerly the most common cause of meningitis, and a leading cause of other serious invasive infections in children. Ontario now provides HIB vaccine in its immunization program for children. The vaccine is given in four doses before the age of two, in combination with diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus and polio vaccines.

The Ontario rate per 100,000 people was 0.3 in 1999. This is below the Canadian average of 0.8, and a significant drop from 1992, when the rate stood at over 6 per 100,000 people.

B. Early Development

Early Development Indicators are based on data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY) made available by the federal government to enable the provinces to report on the child well-being indicators.

The NLSCY survey takes a sample of children and youth every two years. The sample is valid on a provincial basis, but not for a smaller area. The Ontario data is based on 5,852 Ontario children. The data all meet Statistics Canada's guidelines to be classified as "Acceptable". Children living on reserves are not included in the sample.

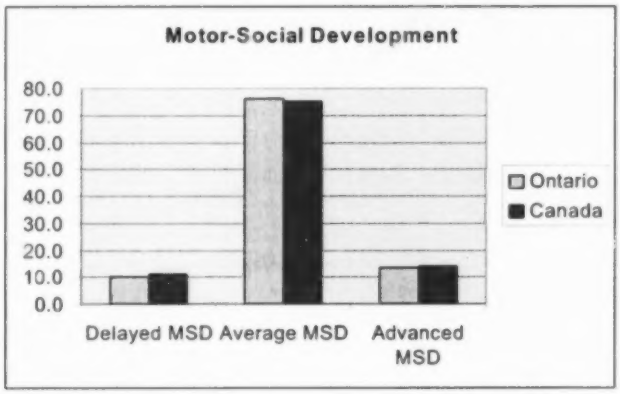
While Ontario will use the NLSCY data in this initial Report, we intend to provide our own data for future reports.

For each of the Early Development Indicators we have chosen to focus on the proportion that are healthy, or in the average range, as opposed to the smaller percentage considered to have a problem of some sort. We have used the total Canadian sample as the key point of comparison. However, it must be noted that because of the relatively large size of the Ontario sample, there is a tendency for the overall Canadian score to be close to the Ontario score.

- Motor and Social Development

  The results for motor and social development in children are based on 15 questions about children from birth to three years of age. The questions are typically answered by a parent. Motor Development is about the child's ability to perform physical tasks such as walking, climbing stairs, running, etc. Social Development concerns the way a child interacts with others.

Ontario children showed average motor and social development in 76.1 per cent of the cases. This is slightly higher than the Canadian average of 75.1 per cent.



- Emotional Maturity

Emotional maturity was measured in the NLSCY for children two to five years of age. The results are reported for two areas – emotional or anxiety problems, and hyperactivity and/or inattention. As with the other Early Development Indicators, we report the proportion that fall in the "Normal" or "Average" range. It is important to note that these categories do **not** reflect professional diagnoses.

i) Emotional Problems/Anxiety

It is harder for a tense or highly anxious child to learn effectively. The NLSCY used two scales to assess the extent to which behaviours indicative of emotional or anxiety problems were present in the sample of children. A 12-point scale was used for children aged two to three, a 16-point scale was used for children aged four to five. The scales identified children who showed high anxiety, as opposed to those who did not.

In the Ontario sample, 86 per cent of the children did not display high emotional problems as defined by the scale. This is slightly lower than the Canadian average, 86.2 per cent.

ii) Hyperactivity-Inattention

It is important for a child to be able to pay attention to a task. The NLSCY used a behaviour scale to indicate the presence or absence of child behaviours indicating an ability to do this. As with the indicator above, the scale showed either that a child displayed the problem behaviour, or he/she did not.

Hyperactivity and Inattention were not identified as problems in 87.9 per cent of the Ontario sample, slightly better than the 87.8 per cent figure for all Canadian children.

- Social Knowledge and Competence

Social knowledge and competence refers to the way children behave and are able to communicate feelings and wants. Both of the indicators in this section were measured for children aged two to five years. Results for social knowledge and competence of children are based on questions about the children, typically answered by a parent.

i) Physical Aggression/Conduct Problems

This measure distinguished children who showed high levels of physical aggression, oppositional behaviour, and/or conduct disorder, as opposed to those who did not. It was based on responses to a series of questions.

Physical aggression and conduct problems were not issues for 85.6 per cent of Ontario children sampled, the same as for all Canadian children.

ii) Prosocial Behaviour

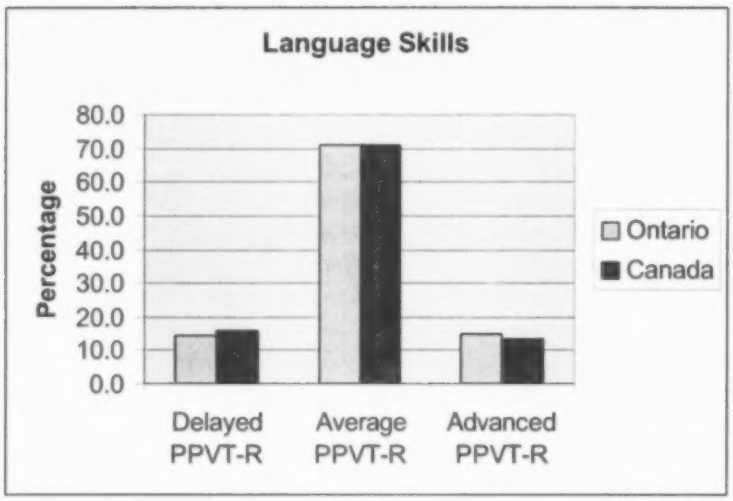
The Prosocial Behaviour score measured the degree to which children help and cooperate with others. As with the other measures, it was based on the answers to several questions, and distinguished between those who showed low pro-social behaviour from those who did not.

In Ontario, 92.7 per cent of children scored as having "Not Low" prosocial behaviour. This was better than the Canadian average of 89.9 per cent.

- Language Skills

Language skills are measured in the NLSCY by the Peabody Picture and Vocabulary Test (PPVT-R). The PPVT-R is designed to measure receptive or hearing vocabulary in either English or French. It is administered by a trained interviewer directly to children. Only results for children aged four to five years are included in the figures represented here.

Ontario's children scored at the Canadian average on the PPVT-R, with 70.8 per cent falling in the "Average" range. However, a slightly higher percentage scored as "Advanced", 14.7 per cent compared to 13.3 per cent.


Language Skills
Percentage
80.0
70.0
60.0
50.0
40.0
30.0
20.0
10.0
0.0
Delayed PPVT-R
Average PPVT-R
Advanced PPVT-R
Ontario
Canada

Summary

Based on the indicators used for this Report, Ontario's children appear to be doing as well as or better than Canadian children in general, in most of the 11 areas measured. However, they could be doing better. Many of the initiatives of Ontario's Early Years Plan described in this Report focus on areas where improvements are desirable. It is our hope that they will collectively lead to improvements in the outcome indicators over time.

The table that follows summarizes the results for all 11 indicators in Ontario and Canada as a whole:

SUMMARY OF ONTARIO CHILD OUTCOME INDICATORS

Indicator	Ontario	Canada
A. Physical Health (Lower scores are better)		
Low Birth Weight	5.8%	5.5%
Infant Mortality (per 1,000 live births)	5.4	5.3
Immunization: (per 100,000 people)		
- Meningitis	.5	.5
- Measles	.03	.5
- HIB	.3	.8
B. Early Development (Higher percentages are better)		
Average Motor and Social Development	76.1%	75.1%
No Emotional Problems/Anxiety	86.0%	86.2%
No Hyperactivity-Inattention	87.9%	87.8%
Low Physical Aggression/Conduct Problem	85.6%	85.6%
Prosocial Behaviour	92.7%	89.9%
Average to Above-Average Language Skills	85.5%	84.1%